

Weekly News

CLASSROOM READY • WEEK 1 2010 • LEVEL 2

Flooding Disaster in Pakistan

In July 2010, the rains began falling in Pakistan. This wasn't seen as unusual—summer, after all, is **monsoon** season in southern Asia. The rains just kept on coming, however, and have now resulted in some of the worst flooding the country has ever seen. In fact, at one point, approximately one-fifth of the country's total land area was underwater (Pakistan is just a bit smaller than Ontario in land size).

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has called the flooding the worst disaster he has ever seen. At least 1,600 people have died as a result of the flooding, and more than a million homes have been destroyed. The UN estimates that more than 20 million people have been injured or made homeless. The UN points out that the number of

people who have been affected by the Pakistan floods is more than the combined total of people affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, and the 2010 Haiti earthquake.

In recent days, the flood waters have begun to recede. However many people are still in desperate need of food, shelter, and clean water. Aid workers in the region also worry that the large pools of stagnant water may become breeding grounds for waterborne diseases, and for mosquitoes that carry malaria.

And even as the waters begin to fall back, Pakistan faces an ongoing crisis. Entire towns and villages have been submerged or swept away and will need to be rebuilt. The floods have damaged at least 7.9 million acres of farmland—about 14 percent of the land that Pakistan uses to produce

food. The cost of crops lost to the floods is estimated to be \$2.86 billion U.S.

Muslim nations have donated nearly \$1 billion U.S. to help Pakistan, and the UN has requested an initial \$460 million U.S. for emergency relief. It is been observed, though, that aid from western nations has been less than for other disasters. One poll found that while 38 percent of Canadians made donations to help Haiti after its recent earthquake, only 4 percent have made similar donations on behalf of Pakistan. In the United States, a Red Cross mobile phone campaign raised \$31 million for Haiti; so far, a similar campaign has raised just \$10,000 for Pakistan.

Did You Know?

Scientists believe the flooding in Pakistan is linked to the heat wave and wildfires in Russia—both the result of unusual global weather patterns. ★

Monsoon: Any wind system that influences a large area and that changes direction with the season. Also refers to the summer wind in southern Asia that blows in from the ocean, bringing with it heavy rains.

Weekly News Q & A

Flooding Disaster in Pakistan

1. How did Pakistan's monsoon season differ from other years?

2. Describe the extent of the flooding.

3. Now that the flood waters are receding, what are people's greatest needs?

4. How has the flooding affected Pakistan's annual food supply?

5. What is the link between this flood and the heat wave and wildfires in Russia?

Critical Thinking

1. How does this disaster compare with other recent major disasters such as the Indian Ocean tsunami and the Kashmir and Haiti earthquakes? In what way are comparisons like this helpful? Unhelpful?

2. Western nations are giving far less aid to Pakistan than they did to Haiti. Why do you think this is happening?

Political Cartoon

AT HOME WITH A FAMOUS GLOBAL WARMING DEBUNKER:



1. What is the cartoon stating?

Word Power

Using the words below, fill in the blanks in the following sentences. All of the words have been used in the article.

1. It took five days after the rain stopped for the flood waters to start to _____.
2. Having not eaten for two days, they were _____ for some food.
3. The troubles Jason had faced really _____ the people who heard his story.
4. There were _____ 50 people at the meeting.
5. Susan _____ the milk and eggs in a big bowl before adding sugar and flour.

affected, approximately, campaign, combined, desperate, estimates, malaria, ongoing, rebuilt, recede, similar, stagnant, submerge, unusual, waterborne

Quiz

Flooding Disaster in Pakistan

1. At one point approximately one-fifth of the country's total land area was underwater.
True False
2. Summer is hurricane season in southern Asia.
True False
3. The cost of crops lost to the floods is estimated to be _____ U.S.
4. Aid workers in the region worry that the large pools of _____ water may become breeding grounds for _____ diseases, and for mosquitoes that carry _____.
5. Scientists believe the flooding in Pakistan is linked to the heat wave and wildfires in _____.

Weekly News Answer Key

Flooding Disaster in Pakistan

1. How did Pakistan's monsoon season differ from other years?

The rains kept coming—much more rainfall than in an average year, leading to severe flooding.

2. Describe the extent of the flooding.

About one-fifth of the land area of Pakistan was underwater. Pakistan is a little smaller in area than Ontario.

3. Now that the flood waters are receding, what are people's greatest needs?

They need food, shelter, and clean water. The large pools of standing water could be a breeding ground for diseases and especially for mosquitoes that spread malaria.

4. How has the flooding affected Pakistan's annual food supply?

The floods have damaged at least 7.9 million acres of farmland—about 14 percent of the land that Pakistan uses to produce food. The cost of crops lost to the floods is estimated to be \$2.86 billion U.S.

5. What is the link between this flood and the heat wave and wildfires in Russia?

Scientists believe both are caused by unusual global weather patterns.

Political Cartoon

1. What is the cartoon stating?

Even though there have been drastic changes in the weather lately, some people do not believe in the idea of global warming.

Word Power

1. recede
2. desperate
3. affected
4. approximately
5. combined

Quiz

1. At one point approximately one-fifth of the country's total land area was underwater.

True

2. Summer is hurricane season in southern Asia.

False. Monsoon season.

3. The cost of crops lost to the floods is estimated to be **\$2.86 billion** U.S.

4. Aid workers in the region worry that the large pools of **stagnant** water may become breeding grounds for **waterborne** diseases, and for mosquitoes that carry **malaria**.

5. Scientists believe the flooding in Pakistan is linked to the heat wave and wildfires in **Russia**.